

The FCC should NOT relax the rules governing ownership of local media. As a daily radio listener, I can attest to the fact that over the past 20 years, as more local radio stations have become the property of nationwide chains, quality programming has suffered.

My local classic rock stations, one of which was a cutting-edge and interesting place to park my dial a few years ago, now rely upon a list of 30 cuts from which to choose. While the list may number more than 30, it doesn't sound like anything interesting. Where creative local personalities were introducing the public to great new music and taking the pulse of the community, now there are corporate yes-men. One DJ even works from some other state. It's a pathetic situation driven by greed.

Don't think so? Then what other reason would there be for the media outlets to not be announcing these proposed changes? Of course, on NPR, the topic is a hot one; for-profit radio wants more profit, and won't be making any waves.

My money goes to WYCE-FM, a publicly funded local station playing an eclectic variety of music. On air hosts and listeners alike make the station what it is, and it is the best alternative to bland, flat, every-station-sounds-alike programming.

The same lament of homogenization holds true for newspaper and local print media. Newspaper readers across this country need varying and diverse viewpoints. Political decisions are made and broken by the general public; public discourse, dissention, and exposure to minority (i.e. less than popular) viewpoints are what educate and motivate readers.

By not further relaxing media ownership rules, the FCC will be allowing what little local programming, ownership, and content that still exists to survive. The real loss would be borne by those of us who watch, listen to, and read the local media. And the real costs would be paid by advertisers, who would have fewer people exposed to their presence. Long term, I believe that the negative effects would be far-reaching, affecting small local economies as much as national elections and policies.

We don't want the FCC to allow the Wal-Martization of the broadcast and print media.